

REMARKS

The above amendments and these remarks are responsive to the final Office action dated November 29, 2007, and are being filed as a response after final under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116. Claims 41, 43–60, 62–64, and 96–100 are pending in the application prior to entry of the present amendments to the claims, with claims 47 and 54 being withdrawn from consideration. In the Office action, the Examiner (1) objected to claims 45 and 58, while indicating that the two claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form; (2) allowed claims 96, 99, and 100; and (3) rejected claims 41, 43, 44, 46–53, 55, 56, 59, 60, 62–64, 97, and 98 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,314,485 to Judet (“Judet”).

Applicants traverse the rejections, contending that all of the claims are patentable over the cited reference. Nevertheless, to expedite the issuance of a patent and to more particularly claim aspects of the invention that applicants would like to patent now, applicants have (1) canceled claims 43, 45, 53, 97, and 98, without prejudice; (2) amended claims 41 and 44; and (3) added new claims 101–156. However, applicants reserve the right to pursue any of the canceled claims and/or the amended claims, in original or previously presented form, at a later time. Furthermore, applicants have presented remarks showing that all of the claims are patentable over the cited reference. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application and prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance covering all of the pending claims.

I. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 41, 43, 44, 46–53, 55, 56, 59, 60, 62–64, 97, and 98 as being obvious over Judet. Applicants traverse the rejections, contending that all of the claims are patentable over the cited reference. Nevertheless, for the reasons set forth above, applicants have amended the claims in accordance with the subject matter deemed to be allowable in the Office action, as described below.

II. Allowed and Objected to Claims / Claim Amendments

The Examiner (1) objected to claims 45 and 58, while indicating that the two claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, and (2) allowed independent claims 96, 99, and 100. In response, applicants have (1) rewritten claim 45 in independent form (by amending independent claim 41), and (2) added new dependent claims, based on existing claims, that depend from and further limit allowed claims 96, 99, and 100.

The present communication amends independent claim 41 to correspond to objected-to claim 45 rewritten in independent form. Specifically, claim 41 has been amended to include all of the limitations of claim 45 and intervening dependent claim 43. Therefore, amended claim 41 should be allowable. Claims 44, 46–52, 54–60, and 62–64, which depend from claim 41, should be allowed for at least the same reasons that amended claim 41 is allowable.

The present communication also adds 56 new claims that depend from allowed claims 96, 99, and 100. Claims 101–118 depend from claim 96, claims 119–137 depend from claim 99, and claims 138–156 depend from claim 100. Therefore, each of claims 101–156 should be allowed for at least the same reasons as claim 96, 99, or 100.

The present communication cancels the following claims, without prejudice: dependent claim 43, 45, and 53, and independent claims 97 and 98.

Claims 47 and 54 were withdrawn in response to an earlier election requirement. Applicants respectfully request that these claims be reinstated, because they depend from and are covered by allowable amended claim 41.

The status of the each claim currently or previously pending in the application is listed, without limitation, in the following table:

<i>Claim(s)</i>	<i>Exemplary Support (and/or Explanation)</i>
1–40	Previously canceled
41 (Independent)	Amended in present response to incorporate objected to claim 45 and intervening claim 43
42	Previously canceled
43	Canceled, without prejudice, in present response, following amendment of claim 41
44	Amended in present response to address a formal issue created by amendment of claim 41
45	Canceled, without prejudice, in present response, following amendment of claim 41
46–52	No amendments in present response
53	Canceled, without prejudice, in present response
54–60	No amendments in present response
61	Previously canceled
62–64	No amendments in present response
65–95	Previously canceled
96 (Independent)	Allowed
97 (Independent)	Canceled, without prejudice, in present response
98 (Independent)	Canceled, without prejudice, in present response
99 (Independent)	Allowed
100 (Independent)	Allowed
101	Claim 43 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
102	Claim 44 (Depends from allowed claim 96)

<i>Claim(s)</i>	<i>Exemplary Support (and/or Explanation)</i>
103	Claim 46 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
104	Claim 47 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
105	Claim 48 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
106	Claim 49 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
107	Claim 50 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
108	Claim 51 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
109	Claim 52 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
110	Claim 54 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
111	Claim 55 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
112	Claim 56 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
113	Claim 57 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
114	Claim 59 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
115	Claim 60 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
116	Claim 62 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
117	Claim 63 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
118	Claim 64 (Depends from allowed claim 96)
119	Claim 43 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
120	Claim 44 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
121	Claim 46 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
122	Claim 47 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
123	Claim 48 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
124	Claim 49 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
125	Claim 50 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
126	Claim 51 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
127	Claim 52 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
128	Claim 54 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
129	Claim 55 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
130	Claim 56 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
131	Claim 57 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
132	Claim 58 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
133	Claim 59 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
134	Claim 60 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
135	Claim 62 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
136	Claim 63 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
137	Claim 64 (Depends from allowed claim 99)
138	Claim 43 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
139	Claim 44 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
140	Claim 46 (Depends from allowed claim 100)

<i>Claim(s)</i>	<i>Exemplary Support (and/or Explanation)</i>
141	Claim 47 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
142	Claim 48 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
143	Claim 49 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
144	Claim 50 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
145	Claim 51 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
146	Claim 52 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
147	Claim 54 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
148	Claim 55 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
149	Claim 56 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
150	Claim 57 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
151	Claim 58 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
152	Claim 59 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
153	Claim 60 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
154	Claim 62 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
155	Claim 63 (Depends from allowed claim 100)
156	Claim 64 (Depends from allowed claim 100)


III. Conclusion

Applicants believe that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowance covering all of the pending claims. If there are any questions regarding this communication, or if a telephone interview would

in any way advance prosecution of the application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney of record, James R. Abney, or his associate Stanley M. Hollenberg (Reg. No. 47,658), both at the telephone number listed below.

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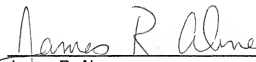
I hereby certify that this correspondence is being submitted via the EFS-Web Electronic Filing System to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on January 29, 2008.



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Respectfully submitted,

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